

THE PORTLAND MOTH: *OCHROPLEURA PRAECOX* (L.) IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE. — During a recent visit to the Sheffield Museum I noticed a few lepidoptera in the “new acquisitions” cabinet. Among those shown was a specimen of the Portland Moth with a data label — “Clumber 14.8.78, Fred Harrison”. Whilst there have been previous Derbyshire records I believe this may be the first from Nottinghamshire. The specimen exhibited was significantly smaller and paler with more intense markings, than those I have seen on the Dorset coast. — P. J. BAKER, Mount Vale, The Drive, Sandhills Lane, Virginia Water, Surrey.

Practical Hints — June

Overwintering the eggs of the High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe* L.) can present problems, but I have found the most successful way is to keep them in a refrigerator. Most of mine were laid on the flowers of red valerian (*Kentranthus ruber*), which had been put into the laying cage for the female to feed from. The petals bearing eggs were plucked out each evening, and trimmed off close to the egg with a sharp knife and left to dry. After about a month, when the small larva had matured inside the egg, the eggs were sealed in a small plastic box and placed in a fridge. They were then left there till early the following March, when it was noticed that several larvae had hatched, though the temperature had been kept at about 38°F. However, nearly all the larvae hatched about a week after removal of the eggs from the fridge. Some petals with eggs attached were not trimmed, and though left in the fridge, mould developed and none of these eggs hatched (REVELS).

The last week in June is the best time to collect larvae of the Butterbur (*Hydraecia petasitis* Doubleday). Make a small tear in the leaf to separate the top of the main petiole. If there is a brown stain inside, a larva will be present in the root, which should be dug up and buried in wet peat. Collect the pupa from the peat at the end of July (WILD).

Agrotis ripae Hbn. is one of the most beautiful agrotids, though unfortunately the lovely delicate speckling on its wings fades after a time. The ground colour and speckling match the sand on which it rests, where I assume it sits flat and shuffles its wings so that some grains trickle onto them and obscure its outline. The red sands at Dawlish where it feeds on sea convolvulus produce the most striking form; the white sands of West Wittering produce the palest insects I know; and the white and black speckles of the sand in Cornish coves has a lovely form to match. The latter form is repeated in the Scilly Isles (but mine only from Bryer) and at Roslare Strand in Ireland, but I have not found it on the west coasts of Ireland or Scotland though it is common on the east coast both north and south of Montrose. I can tell at once if *ripae* is likely to be present as it requires special conditions — ordinary sand-dunes are not sufficient — what it needs are its special food-